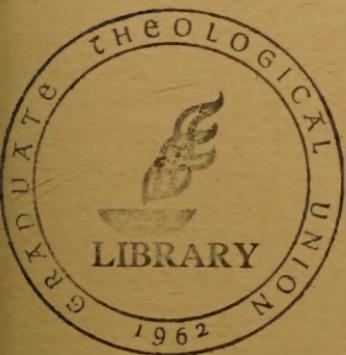


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# ***THE JOURNAL OF THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY***

AUG 16 1979



***April — May — June, 1979***



Throssel Hole Priory is a training monastery, parish church and retreat centre following the Sōtō Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey, whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess. Shasta Abbey, Headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church, is located in Mt. Shasta, California U.S.A. The Priors of Throssel Hole Priory are disciples of Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett and follow her teaching.

## ***Throssel Hole Priory and Journal***

*The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory* is published as a service to people who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal the Priory's members and friends share their understanding and meditation experience. We invite our readers to submit material arising from the practice of meditation to be considered for publication. Opinions expressed in each article are those of its author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Priors. The Journal is published bi-monthly (or less frequently with an equivalent number of pages).

PRIORS:           Rev. Rōshi Hogetsu Schomberg, O.B.C.  
                      Rev. Rōshi Kōshin Schomberg, O.B.C.

TRUSTEES:          Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess  
                      Rev. Rōshi Jishō Perry, O.B.C.  
                      Rev. Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Taking Refuge in the Sangha Rev. Rōshi Hōgetsu Schomberg, O.B.C.	2
On Being Kind to Yourself Rev. Myōhō Harris	10
Coming Retreats and Sesshins at Throssel Hole Priory	13
British Subscriptions to <i>The Journal of Shasta Abbey</i>	14
News of the British Monks at Shasta Abbey	15
The Book of Life	16
On "Enlightenment Intensives"	19
When the World Pulls Rev. Rōshi Kōshin Schomberg, O.B.C.	21
Subscriptions to <i>The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory</i>	25
Training in the World Rev. Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.	26
Priory News	30
Order Form	32

Address Correspondence to:  
The Priors  
Throssel Hole Priory  
Carr Shield, Nr. Hexham  
Northumberland, NE47 8AL  
(Telephone Whitfield 204)

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## TAKING REFUGE IN THE SANGHA

Rev. Rōshi Hōgetsu Schomberg, O.B.

When we first take on a specific way of training the self, such as Zen Buddhism, there are many things which we do not yet understand on the level of our own experience. We take such aspects of training as sitting meditation, the Scriptures, bowing, the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, not as final realities to be believed absolutely before we even start, but simply as "working hypotheses," possibly useful forms to be tried and tested with our own meditation experience. We don't yet know the meaning and value of these forms but something inside us tells us that it is "good" for us to give them a try. Thus, Refuge in the Buddha begins with admitting to ourselves that there is a reason to undertake this training in the first place, that maybe we could be better than we are, maybe there is something more to life than we see at present. Refuge in the Dharma or Teaching starts with trusting that certain teachings, certain ways of training ourselves will help us to find whatever is There, this Buddha Nature. Taking Refuge in the Sangha starts with trusting the fact that there are people who have also used this way of training successfully and who are willing to share it, and that maybe they can help us.

There is a fundamental urge which brings us to look for our Real Nature, and at first many of us think that Zazen or sitting meditation is the only or most important aspect of the Teaching. It is with the Sangha, the Community of Trainees, that many of us have problems in the beginning; not just Sangha in the general sense of "everyone who trains" but specifically a community which includes spiritual "seniors," those more experienced in meditating and using what are, in fact, definite religious forms.

We come to Zen training with many ideas and beliefs about the nature of the world, ourselves, and Zen training. These make it difficult for us to see what is

actually to be found in Zen training. Zen has been promoted in the West as being a philosophical system, a lifestyle, an artform, "just sitting", a spontaneous "nothing" or a mysterious esoteric "something", a collection of foreign cultural forms, or linguistic, historical scholarship. These things may exist in their own right but regardless of time, money or effort invested in them they will not necessarily bring anyone closer to the Buddha Nature; they can as easily become expressions of the selfish self rather than the training of self.

Some people are very surprised to discover that Zen is a religion, that it has been using specific forms for hundreds of years, handed down from generation to generation of trainees. These forms are deeper than their external appearance and should not be confused with cultural forms to be discarded now that Zen has come to the West. They have developed and been handed down, not from a mechanical adherence to tradition but because they have been found to be helpful: they actually worked, kept working, and still work for anyone willing to give them a try.

A commonly accepted notion of Zen in the West is that it should be a "do-it-yourself" synthesis starting with sitting meditation (for those lucky enough to realize that there is such a thing and lucky enough to find sound, practical instructions on how to do it) and mixing it up with assorted ideas from best-selling and scholarly books; what results is a vicarious "understanding" rather than what comes of a person meditating and discovering the Truth for himself. Shakyamuni Buddha did warn his followers not to believe or do anything only because he said it ("...and he's the BUDDHA!"). At the same time he taught about karma, rebirth, self, the Eightfold Path, the impermanence of all things, and other potentially useful information. He did not say nothing; he did not refuse to share his experience with others. He taught anyone who came and asked for teaching. And so it is with Zen training; the living teaching has passed from Shakyamuni Buddha down through generation upon

generation of Teachers, and can be found even at the present time in the true Sangha.

It is not enough simply to notice the trend for self-styled expertise in religion today, we need to go deeper to the underlying causes, to see why do-it-yourself religion approaches the same limitations as the traditional iron-bound religions to which it so strongly reacts. We do not have to look very far or wide to notice and remember the forms of religion in which most of us were raised and which are in use today all around us. Some very strange things are done in the name of spiritual training, and for many of us who tried and trusted certain religious forms, or who simply looked at them with real awareness, were bitterly disappointed. For many of us religion became a very dirty word.

It might be helpful at this point to actually look at the word "religion": "re-" and "ligare" meaning "to join again", "to bind again" in the sense of binding up a wound. The understanding of Zen is that fundamentally our Real Nature is pure--we are not sinful or evil in our Original nature, only that somewhere along the line we lost sight of our Real Nature and separated ourselves from It, at least in our own consciousness; a case of a shadow coming between one who loves and the beloved. This "wounded love" longs to be healed, and this brings us to religion. Even as children many of us sincerely practised religion in response to this basic longing.

Unfortunately there is also such a thing as "wounded religion", not necessarily the religious forms themselves but in their being misunderstood and misused by people. We do not have to look far into the history of any religious tradition (Buddhism included, for those who might think otherwise) to see that there have been those who used religious practice in the service of the selfish self, sometimes deliberately in the greed for power, fame or wealth; and sadly enough, sometimes unknowingly, with the best of intentions to do good. Instead of bringing

about healing, this "wounded love" in action simply led to more wounded love for the doer and those to whom it was done.

It is one thing to speak in general terms of church history, but for many of us the experience of wounded religion was quite painful and personal. Instead of meeting those who recognized the problem of wounded love and who could tell us what to do about it (not from a book but from they themselves actually having done it successfully) we were met by confusion; by argument over which form of religion had to be the only one for everyone; by the dilemma of doctrine and belief--"you must believe this, not from your own experience, but because we say so and have eternal damnation to back us up if you don't." After such experiences it is no small wonder that many of us left wanting to throw a brick or worse at the nearest passing religious form, vowing never to have anything to do with it again. There is within each of us a natural dignity which flatly refuses to be bullied or otherwise manipulated into "goodness."

Such experiences leave scars. When love has been further wounded, when love and trust lead to pain, we often conclude that it was stupid and foolish to have loved or trusted at all. It is important to know that the probelm was not in having loved and trusted but in the fact of basic ignorance, the element of wounded love already existing in both ourself and the other, what Zen calls "beginningless greed, hate and delusion." There was an important piece of the puzzle missing regardless of how hard we or others were trying; this is sad, but has to be accepted before we can stop blaming either ourselves or others. Not knowing this we instead harden ourselves in the hopes that maybe this will prevent us from being hurt again, even though hardness only locks the pain in. We go to the opposite extreme of trusting only ourselves; we become self-reliant in a way which becomes reliance on the selfish self. We think that from now on we must find and know all the answers ourselves, that someone will laugh at us or mislead us if we were to trust

again; that we can never again admit we do not know something, or that we have been mistaken, or that we want help.

But hardness and fear fail to heal or satisfy our deep longing, and sooner or later we begin to look again for a way of healing our selves. Although some people call it a search for a new religion it is simply a search for a way that works, and more specifically for living proof, for someone who is himself or herself doing it with genuine results and who can show us how to do it ourselves. For in one sense we must do it ourselves. Only we can look within ourselves and deal with the consequences of our own choices and actions; only we live within our own skins, and only we can do our own spiritual training. Only our own energy and awareness in training will work; anyone who comes to a real spiritual teacher for a detailed personality analysis and a detailed plan for the rest of his or her life will be greatly disappointed. "Buddhas do but point the way, thou must go alone" is doing-it-yourself in the right way.

Before we find the Buddha, a way to trust, we go through a period of disillusionment with that which didn't work and of searching for something that will; we try very diligently to create our own path of spiritual training. There are many pitfalls in doing this because even with the best of intentions we must take the selfish self into consideration. The selfish self has a rather large vested interest in keeping things going the way it wants and more than a little experience and subtlety in getting what it wants. So in relying completely on yourself the potential for self-deception is very high. In my own situation I thought I could see pretty clearly where it was I wanted to go, but I did not have much success in getting there. For me self-deception took the form of going after spirituality in a haphazard, sporadic way, constantly making resolves and falling short. Gradually it became evident to me that I needed to find a healthy self-discipline; a definite way of training; a teacher. Seeing a need prompts us to look, and when

we are ready to trust and listen to our Hearts instead of our hurt we will find a way.

Despite the scandal of "wounded religion" there remains the fact that within every genuine religious tradition there have been those who did not lose the point of it and who were able to develop the ways of healing both themselves and others, and to pass these ways on to others. This is what is meant by the Sangha, the community of trainees: implicit in it is not only the reality of many people training together, but also that there are some who are more experienced--who have done it longer under genuine teachers and who know from hard experience that some ways of training work better than others. There is a lot to be said for learning from your own mistakes- in fact, mistakes are the experiences from which we learn the most once we are not afraid to look at them. But there is a lot to be said for not making every mistake in the book yourself simply because you think you are supposed to "do it all yourself." Concepts like "democracy", "equality", or "we are all Buddha, we are all enlightened" can be used to justify selfish-reliance, refusing to admit that someone might know something which could also be helpful for us; this is the element of past hurt showing through.

The fact is that there are those who have been training themselves seriously for years when we are only beginning to do so ourselves. "Buddha bowing to Buddha" is the basis for the system of "seniority" in Zen training; the Secret Papers which a Zen priest receives at the time of Transmission state clearly that Buddhism will last only as long as there is bowing--recognising that there is someone more experienced in training than ourselves. Really, that there is something Greater than my own selfish self. Bowing is never a matter of being better or worse than someone else: it is Buddha bowing to Buddha. For this reason bowing, the gasshō, is not a quaint or unnecessary oriental custom but an essential expression of training the selfish self.

In the person-to-person Transmission of the training and Truth certain other forms are handed down, again because they have been found to be useful. Zen or sitting meditation is where we learn about the Mind of meditation, the gut-level learning where we make contact with this Mind and to which we return constantly. And so that we may learn to maintain this stillness of Mind within all activity, not just sitting, Zen has developed other forms, specific ways of being in everyday life. Because we learn from all our senses we have statues to see, to make visible those qualities we are trying to find within ourselves; we have Scriptures to recite and hear as well as read; ceremonies to do, which make physical and actual what has been up to that point only the silent inner longings of our hearts. This is the way of actual Zen training. When we first encounter it as opposed to our old ideas of it, the reactions can be very strong and from what we have already seen, understandably so. Although we can see before us a way which seems to be working for some people and which a small voice within us says might work for us, we are fearful to try it because it looks in some ways like something we tried before with bad results. We can sit back and debate this for as long as we want, but the only way to know whether this thing will work is to be willing to give it a try, plunge in and try it completely, reserving judgement until we have really tried it. The selfish self wants advance guarantees of success but there are none, except that small voice within us, the voice of our Heart or Buddha Nature which says, "Yes, this feels right for me, I think I could try a little more of this."

Besides reducing the factor of self-deception there is another reason that a reliable teacher and community of trainees is of such importance. Even though we can realize deeply through meditation that everyone and everything which exists is part of the Buddha Nature, this does not mean that all actions are necessarily helpful for us personally in alleviating our own suffering and stopping future suffering. There is the ideal, "we are all Buddha", and the actual, that we have eager little selfish selves who

find it hard to resist jumping in and joining whatever is going on around us even when part of us knows very well that to do so will not be helpful. Seeking the support of others who are doing the same spiritual training does not mean that we judge or cut ourselves off in the spiritual sense from those who do not--we share the same Buddha Nature. We are being solidly realistic. By worldly standards to do something about the selfish self is at best stupid or foolish and at worst impossible. If we take doing something about self seriously it is necessary to know others who do likewise so that we do not become discouraged and join the world's delusions. Real spirituality does not make us cold or "holy" no matter who we are with; the exact opposite is the case but there will be times when training is quite a lonely business.

There is a genuine help and warmth to be found in the community of trainees which is not to be found anywhere else, and some of us have looked in a lot of places. We might be tempted to think that from past dealings with individuals or groups of people that we know the meaning of Sangha. Only when we meditate and train, begin to grow in trust and acceptance and let old wounds heal do we begin to realise what we have become a part of. Those who have not yet experienced this will find it hard to believe that there could be such an immense feeling of coming home in being with those who are doing the same training, but I can assure them that when they taste the real thing they will wonder why they waited so long to be a part of it.

\* \* \*

## ON BEING KIND TO YOURSELF

Rev. Myōhō Harris

"Zen" means "meditation" and to meditate is to be still. I have heard it said that one of the purposes of Buddhist statues is to remind us of this. Not that I should never move physically but that the mind, if I am prepared to let it, will be permanently centred in Zazen, which is the natural expression of stillness.

The "if I am prepared to let it" is very important. I have been given the gift of choice, I can choose whether to act from duality or stillness. It is choice which allows me to change and meditation which allows me to be still and, as a result of that stillness, to know and act upon selfless love.

To be still is an act of love; for that which mediates does not want to indulge the negativity which will continue to arise as long as I am human. Greed, hate and delusion can, and do, cause much pain and strong emotional feelings to arise, but if I am to be kind to myself then I must not use these as excuses for not training. My egocentric self becomes threatened when I meditate and will try to disrupt the stillness. This is not an obstacle to my training but an opportunity to deal with my karma. It is a responsibility which, although not easy, is a labour of love.

Disruptive karma is the result of a mistake which I have made and will continue as long as I let the egocentric self feed the delusion. I will never, and should not try to, escape the consequences of my actions. Karma can deal some very heavy blows which don't stop just because I'm meditating. Training won't show me how to escape responsibility but it does show me how to deal with it. The mind in meditation will not give substance to delusive thoughts, it will see them for what they are. It won't reject them, act upon them or stop them from arising. It will allow me to look at what's going on, to see what I need to do and to do it. There is a voice within which looks at the disturbance and says, "No, I

love you too much to let this continue." There is no anger, confusion or desire to repress through fear, neither is there guilt or self judgement. There is just a lesson which needed to be learnt, for karma is a great teacher. When the delusion has been squarely faced and converted through Sange (contrition), meditation and training, it can provide a valuable guideline for the rest of my life by showing me how not to repeat the mistake. Nothing is wasted, everything that happens can be used positively. Even in the midst of distressing situations there is always tenderness and great warmth beneath the pain telling me that, no matter how dark the darkness gets, no matter what I do or don't do I am and always will be loved--even when I'm not aware of it. When this is realized the relief and gratitude are indescribable. Even though I may turn away from the Cosmic Buddha, He will never turn away from me, and all those times when I thought life was so awful were really the appearance of a Buddha asking for the help of a Buddha.

There are many times when I blow it, and since starting my training I've made some big mistakes. These have taught me some big lessons which have helped me deepen my training. If I become afraid of making a mistake then I will also be afraid of finding perfection; if I need to repeat mistakes in order to learn then maybe I should look more carefully at what I'm doing, but I must be careful not to demand answers and reasons. As someone once said, "The Lord doesn't always appear when we expect Him to, but He's never late." I don't always get what I want, but it is always what I need!

Yes, I am a human being, I feel pain, have favourite foods, colours, authors, I can laugh and cry, I miss my dog--I can allow there to be no more than this or I can meditate and see the view widen considerably so that everything falls into a different perspective. My humanity is not a threat to my training, it is that which turns me towards the "going on". It is that which shows me how and where to train. As the koan\* appears naturally in daily life, so does the solution unfold

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\* Spiritual problem.

naturally through meditation.

In the Shushōgi\* Dogen says, "This very mind is itself Buddha." I interpret this as meaning that pure love lives within each of us. Through meditation I can learn to express that love by seeing and knowing it as a living reality which is my True Self. The journey home takes as long as it takes but the road is always beneath my feet. When the going gets rough I can say "To hell with it" (then hell is just what I'll get) or I can be still and say "What needs my help? How can I give? Please show me what to do"--and then do it whilst keeping my foot firmly on the ground and my eyes always looking up. For the Light of Buddha is always increasing in brilliance and the Wheel of the Dharma is always turning, even in the darkest of hells.

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\*"What is Truly Meant by Training and Enlightenment", in *Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 163.

## COMING RETREATS AND SESSHINS

Two major sesshins (intensive meditation retreats) will be held at Throssel Hole Priory during the summer months. A Denkoe sesshin is planned for June 21-25. The theme of a Denkoe sesshin is the Transmission of the Light as described by Keizan Zenji. This retreat will be a short sesshin, beginning on a Thursday evening and ending at noon on the following Monday. The cost of the sesshin is £20.

The main sesshin of the year is the Jūkai sesshin held this year from 25 to 31 August. Jūkai (literally "Ten Precepts meeting") is a time of special meditative effort, self-examination and commitment to Zen training. During the Jūkai sesshin those who wish to do so may formally take the Precepts, becoming lay Buddhists in the ceremony of lay ordination. The cost of the Jūkai sesshin is £30.

## WEEKEND RETREATS

Weekend retreats at Throssel Hole Priory are scheduled for the following dates:

July 6-8 and 27-29

August 10-12

September 7-9 and 21-23

The cost of a weekend retreat is £10 (or £8 per person if three or more people register together for the retreat).

## RESIDENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Serious lay students of Zen are welcome to participate in the on-going residential training program at Throssel Hole Priory during the summer months. Please write for details.

BRITISH SUBSCRIPTIONS  
TO  
THE JOURNAL OF SHASTA ABBEY

Some people have mentioned that they would be interested in subscribing to *The Journal of Shasta Abbey* but are concerned about the difficulties involved in paying the subscription costs in United States currency. We have discussed the matter with our bank representative (Barclay's Bank) and have found that the most direct and least expensive manner of paying for a subscription to a magazine in the United States is to obtain an International Money Order from a bank.

Because of the government's wish to limit the exchange of British currency for foreign currency, the bank clerk may request that you give some proof that you are actually making payment for something to be received from the United States. We therefore are providing the following form which may be cut out and presented to the bank at the time of requesting an International Money Order. This form can then be sent on to Shasta Abbey along with the payment.

Note: The cost of an International Money Order at most banks is currently 40p. This is, to our knowledge, the least costly way to make such a transaction. Air delivery takes about one week; surface delivery can take over one month. \$1.00=about 50p

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SHASTA ABBEY, P.O.Box 478, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067 U.S.A.

## NEWS OF THE BRITISH MONKS AT SHASTA ABBEY

The nine British monks at Shasta Abbey are continuing their training, most of them with the intention of returning to Throssel Hole Priory within a few years to form the basis of a full training monastery. We are happy to be able to forward to their many friends in the British congregation the following news of the British Sangha's training.

Rev. Daishin Morgan, O.B.C. is Assistant Head of the Abbey's Buddhist Supplies Department. Rev. Daishin has done much to increase the range of stock sold, which now includes some monastic supplies from Japan. In August of last year, Rev. Daishin began a three month term of Kessei as Prior of the Edmonton Buddhist Priory in Canada. After his return from Edmonton, Rev. Daishin continued with his duties at the Abbey, taking a few weeks in March to visit family and friends in England. During this visit, he was able to come to the Priory for a few days, despite blizzardy weather conditions. Rev. Daishin will be completing the ceremonies of Kessei (priest's graduation) this summer.

Rev. Jimyo Krasner also works for the Buddhist Supplies Department and uses her sewing skills for making meditation cushions and lay meditation clothing.

Rev. Saido Kennaway received the Transmission from Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess, during the month of December. A disciple is ready for this ceremony when he has demonstrated in his daily life that he knows how to train as a priest. Rev. Saido is working in the Publicity Department and has also managed to participate in a first aid course and receive instruction in stone masonry from one of the Abbey's senior monks.

Rev. Jitsuyu Evans is a full-time member of the  
(continued on page 18)



"To enter the stream of Buddhism one must  
simply just harmonize the mind and the body."

- *Dogen Zenji*, 1200-1253 A.D.  
(Photo of a painting of  
*Dogen* at *Kenninji*, Kyoto)

## *The Book of Life*

An in-depth study of the law of karma entitled The Book of Life is being published by the Shasta Abbey Press. In it, Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess, and Rev. Rōshi Daizui MacPhillamy, O.B.C. discuss how Zen meditation helps us purify our karma of body, mouth and will, thus removing the "blocks" which separate us from That Which Is.

The first section of the book contains Rev. Rōshi Kennett's discourse on how man rends himself from That Which Is, the Cosmic Buddha, causing dis-harmony of body and mind which leads to mental and physical suffering, old age, disease and death, and how he may once more become one with That Which Is. *"The purpose of this section is to show people how to bring body and spirit back into harmony from within and bring up future generations without this split ever taking place."*

In the second section, Rev. Rōshi MacPhillamy elaborates on the practical methods that may be used by oneself for the purpose of retaining an unrent body and mind. *"Whether the karma is something which you created earlier in this life or whether it is something created by some other being in ages past, there is always a definite and valuable teaching to be found about one's current life. Therefore tensions arising from karmic memories are another opportunity to learn the Teachings of the Buddhas through the aegis of our bodies and minds."*

The Book of Life will be available soon through Throssel Hole Priory. To order, please use the form at the end of this Journal. (368pp., softbound; the price of £4.50 includes shipping.) A limited number of signed and numbered copies of The Book of Life are available direct from Shasta Abbey at \$9.95 (shipping \$.75 extra).

(continued from page 15)

Construction Department and has aided the crew in the building of a new section of cloister and a large gateway.

Rev. Myōhō Harris received the Transmission from Rev. Rōshi Kennett during the Jūkai Sesshin held at Shasta Abbey in April. Rev. Myōhō has welcomed the chance to use her art training in the Publicity Department and has designed the latest Abbey poster. She has also been learning about the home veterinary care of animals and has successfully treated a variety of creatures.

Rev. Chūshin Passmore is Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Infirmarian. He recently completed his term as Chief Junior (the junior priest-trainee who leads all other juniors in all activities), successfully completing the ceremony of Hossen (the testing of the Chief Junior by the other monks) at the end of the training term.

Rev. Meian Elbert is very busy as an assistant to the Abbess. Rev. Meian has just completed her term as Benji (assistant to the Chief Junior).

Rev. Jigen Bartley has been working in the Abbey's large Animal Department, working with the many goats and with ducks and geese as well.

Rev. Mokugen Kublicki has had the demanding job of assisting in the Abbey's busy kitchen. Rev. Mokugen has also done illustrations for the Abbey's Journal.

Training in a large monastery is immensely rewarding when real effort is put forth. It is also difficult. We wish all the British monks continued success in their training at Shasta Abbey. We will continue to include news of the British Sangha in this Journal from time to time.

## ON "ENLIGHTENMENT INTENSIVES"

We have recently become aware of a number of people in Great Britain and on the Continent who are leading so-called "enlightenment" retreats. Some of these people say that they are teaching Zen or using Zen "methods" of teaching during these retreats.

We wish to advise readers of this Journal that the use of terms such as "enlightenment intensive" is itself an indication of a misunderstanding about the nature and purpose of spiritual training. Training is done for its own sake--in order to accept and change oneself; it is not done for the sake of achieving enlightenment. The teaching of Zen is that it is enough to meditate and keep the Precepts; when one lives thus, enlightenment takes care of itself. Always the practice of *compassion* in daily life takes precedence over grasping at one's own idea of what "enlightenment" is.

In the Zen churches, qualified teachers undergo the rigorous training of the priesthood under the supervision of a Master. At each stage of training, the disciple's level of understanding is formally certified by the Master. The signed and sealed certificates are available for examination by anyone who may have cause to wonder whether a person claiming to be a teacher of Zen Buddhism has undergone formal training within the Zen church in question. This system of certification exists for the protection of people who wish to learn meditation and who, in our opinion, have a right to receive qualified instruction.

Zen "methods" of training are not meant to be mixed with various psychological and encounter group methods current at present. To make real progress in training, it is necessary to pick one form of training and do it thoroughly--with competent help when necessary. Zen meditation is a religious practice: to do it properly one must have faith that there is That within one's own heart which is pure and which loves infinitely. Zen priests are trained to teach meditation from this

essential standpoint. While we are aware of the very prevalent mistrust of all things religious--religious organizations, religious forms and priests--it nonetheless remains true that real meditation is a religious act and Buddhism is very much a religion. In reacting against Western religions, some people are looking to Buddhism as a "non-religious religion". What is really needed, however, is not to throw away religion and priests but to do religion properly and have priests who know their job.

As mentioned in the last issue of *The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory*, priests in good standing in the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church carry a current identification card and can, if necessary, show the certificates which prove their qualifications\*. We hope that people who are looking for help in religious training will take great care in finding instructors who have received the training necessary for doing the job well. Above all, we recommend that people consult their own hearts through meditation before taking anyone, regardless of formal qualifications, as a personal teacher.

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\*For an in-depth discussion of the ranks of the priesthood used in our church, see "A Note on Transmission and Priestly Rank," by Rev. Rōshi Daizui MacPhail lamy, *The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory*, July, 1978.

## WHEN THE WORLD PULLS

Rev. Rōshi Kōshin Schomberg, O.B.C.

One of the questions most frequently asked by people who come to the Priory after having meditated regularly for some time is, "How can I keep my training going in the midst of people who notice that I am changing and feel threatened or worried by this fact?"

This pulling of the world can reveal itself in many ways, some of them very, very subtle. In job situations the problem can show itself when a trainee's fellow workers become worried or annoyed by the trainee's keenness and sense of responsibility. Often there is an unspoken agreement among workers that a certain level of care and responsibility is satisfactory--someone who shows in his actions that that level is not good enough for him may risk arousing the fear and ill-will of his peers. Similarly, family and friends may feel threatened by a person's efforts to keep the Precepts more fully. Sometimes even close friends will try to dissuade someone from deepening his training--often by subtle means. Such efforts are rarely done with deliberate malicious intent. Usually they are just the result of one person's attachments being exposed and threatened by another person's efforts to deal with his own attachments. Often friends and family will believe that such changes of behaviour are wrongly motivated and will, with the best of intentions, try to cause the trainee to doubt his own purity of heart. Unless the trainee at this point can muster his will and put his faith in his own meditation rather than in the opinions of others, he will be inundated in confusion and self-doubt.

In fact, when our own inner certainty is established through meditation, we are not easily pulled out of training by the opinions of others. I often find myself telling people that Zen training does not necessarily make one understood or even liked by many people. But it does lead to being respected by others. This is

because people intuitively recognise spiritual integrity. Yet even this respect may only take the form of ceasing to try to draw the trainee into some kind of negativity.

So how does one deepen one's training in the midst of unsympathetic and even resentful acquaintances? The only way I know is to take one's courage in both hands and charge on, being careful all the while to avoid doing anything to *deliberately* cause another pain. If one's training grates on others because it reveals their negativity, then that is their problem. But if one begins to take pride in being different from others, one will begin to intentionally act so as to emphasize the difference--and that leads to unhappiness for everyone concerned. In other words, it is enough for the trainee to do his or her own training; there is no need to try to force others to change. So with this cautionary note in mind, one must use one's will to begin to confront all the anxiety and fear which arise when others are threatened by one's training.

We recite the Kanzeon Scripture and the Litany of the Great Compassionate One each day in the monastery. One of the reasons for doing this is so that we can learn a simple but sometimes painful fact about training. This fact is that the forms of fear are in reality the forms of Kanzeon (Compassion), arising within us in order to teach us about ourselves. When we are willing to go right into the midst of fear and sit still (gulp!), we are placing our faith in Compassion. Then the situations which seemed to be the greatest hindrances to training are revealed as the greatest opportunities. Those who unintentionally stir up our fear through their reactions to our training are the Kanzeons who appear in the midst of hell.

It is very hard to say "No" to delusion. But one who would train must learn to do this. The

thing that worries some people when someone else begins to train seriously is that that person says "No" by refusing to enter into activities which break the Precepts. This refusal can be and usually is gentle as well as firm; even so, it is going to worry and disturb some people. Many people who come to the Priory want to know how they can train without causing others this worry. I am afraid that even the greatest compassion cannot erase the spiritual obstacles of others; one can only do one's own training and if others react to this training negatively there is often little that one can do to alter the situation. This is at times a cause of considerable grief for the trainee. This grief must, like the fear, be worked through in meditation.

The Precepts are the trainee's invaluable friend in these situations. The Precepts help one find how and when to say "No" compassionately. But following the Precepts in daily life will not make life more comfortable. I often think of a job I had shortly after beginning my training. I was working with people who regularly stole from the company in many ways. Lunch breaks would be extended when possible beyond the half hour limit; workers would nonchalantly pocket things belonging to the company, rationalizing the stealing with the excuse that the pay was too low; the effort put forth in work would often be the minimum required to get the job done. Within such a context, I soon became conspicuous--painfully so. The management thought I was a snob because the men I worked with reported that I was aloof. Many of my fellow workers disliked me at first, though in the end most respected and ignored me. Yet I found within this situation the best opportunity to train which I had ever known, for it threw me directly upon my own meditation as my sole support. I made plenty of mistakes (the worst of which was to react self-righteously in the beginning); but I learned more about the nitty gritty of training than I had learned even in the monastery.

I did have one great support during that time for which I am very grateful. I was living in one of our Priories and had the benefit of a kind priest's advice and the fellowship and example of other Priory members. I would venture into the world each morning and return somewhat battered--but a little bit wiser and stronger--each evening. And then during meditation each evening I could find again the Still Place in which all fear and pain are embraced and bathed in compassion. And among the Priory community I could feel truly at home.

This Refuge of the Sangha is a precious thing which only can be understood by one who stands against the world in order to live the Precepts. To do this is to learn to love others truly. Yet many people fear that if they train in this way they will become cold toward others. In fact, the opposite is true: yet to the little self real love can appear to be uncompassionate. Only among people who have made a real commitment to training themselves have I found a social recognition that to train oneself--at times saying "No" firmly to delusion--is to express real love. This is the love shared by the Sangha--a love which is quiet but deep and strong. It is to be a Refuge of the Sangha that Throssel Hole Priory exists and it is in expressing a love which is great enough to include both a firm "No" and a mighty "Yes" that Zen training consists.

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THE JOURNAL OF  
THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY

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If you do not yet subscribe to The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory, we invite you to do so now.

The Journal offers the Priory's members and friends the opportunity to share their experience of training and keep in touch with events at the Priory. The articles on Zen training by both priests and lay students of Zen are uniquely practical, arising from the personal experiences of the writers.

Subscriptions to The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory help support the Priory. This is one important way in which people can join in with other members of the Sangha in contributing to the Priory's work of fostering the growth of Sōtō Zen Buddhist training in Great Britain.

The cost of an annual subscription is £3.25 (£2.75 if paid by standing order).

## TRAINING IN THE WORLD

Rev. Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.

Many peoples' contact with the training of our school is through a retreat, a stay at the Priory or maybe just through reading. When you come to a Priory you have scheduled periods of meditation, work and rest, etc. It is not necessary to spend a great deal of time worrying about what to do next. You have the opportunity to learn how to give yourself completely to each activity as it comes along. This is an excellent way of learning how to let the discursive mind quieten down and just do what needs doing. What happens outside the monastery when you have to schedule your own day and learn to be still without a formal monastic structure to help you?

A vital point to realize is that training is the work of art and can find its expression in many mediums. Each person's particular form will be different and yet that form must express the true Mind of training if progress is to be made.

When you consider how to structure your life, when and for how long to meditate each day, whether you should eat meals in silence and recite the full scripture beforehand, etc., you need to remember that you are not in a monastery. If you wish to train as a monk then you shave your head and live in a monastery. If you do not feel that this is the course for you right now then do not try and impose a monastic structure on a non-monastic setting and feel guilty if you don't match up.

Somebody pointed out to me that training is like sitting down before a blank canvas and starting to paint. If the creation is going to be something more than selfishness then you have to clear away all the notions and concepts and work with whatever your life situation is now.

The foundation is regular Zazen meditation, a continuous effort to be still and allow yourself to see clearly, being willing to take refuge in your own heart.

i.e. listening to the voice of the Lord of the House, the Buddha within, and acting on this. Work on this basis and go ahead, trust yourself, and allow whatever manifestation of training that is right for you to evolve. Have faith that by staying open and being willing to accept mistakes and grow from them you will find your way and progress will be made.

The old masters were said to be great artists because they suited their teaching methods to the needs of their disciples, using whatever situation arose as a means of teaching. Training on your own or with a group you need that same attitude towards your own training. The basis of Zazen is essential, it is the tool that cuts through the vicious circle of self. There is always the danger that you will delude yourself. This is true whatever style, system or "ism" you follow or even if you follow none. The way to ensure that this does not happen is to take refuge in the Sangha (the community of those who practise Buddhism). You find your Sangha wherever you happen to find your training. Whenever possible train with other people. It is in relationships with others that we can have, provided we do not get blinded with self, a panoramic view of that which needs changing within ourselves. The essential thing is to be willing and humble enough to say, "Although I am doing what seems right to me I could be fooling myself." See what results from your being the way you are.

Allow others to teach you, do not judge them as being worthy or unworthy, treat each with respect, knowing that sometimes people teach by showing what not to do. Do not be afraid to admit a mistake. If the effort was sincere it does not mean that you have wasted time or that you are somehow inferior or inadequate.

It takes courage to approach training in this way. You cannot be sleepily supported by some nice ideology which you outwardly conform to. You lay yourself open to being disturbed by the Truth, but what you become is something alive and growing and always moving to-

wards a deeper expression of Buddhism.

The limit on how far we go seems to be the limit of how far we commit ourselves. Training is stretching those limits, never accepting them as final. Allow your practice to grow naturally. Humility and patience are necessary. Start with an amount of time for sitting meditation that you know you can do each day, allow that to grow rather than forcing yourself. Practice should not cut you off from other people. You will find your interests change, certain things you will naturally no longer wish to do and the people you associate with may naturally change, but beware of becoming holier than thou. Have the humility to learn from those around you and do not become so self-centred in your practice that all you care about is your own enlightenment.

Find your monastery in your work. Start with any small repetitive action done each day--walking to work, riding a bus, going up and down stairs, anything simple, and resolve every time you do it to make a special effort to come back and be still in meditation. Gradually grow this practice so that gradually more and more of your day is embraced in meditation.

People often ask us if it's O.K. to go to the pictures/theatre/bar or read science fiction/watch T.V., etc. The guidelines of the Precepts apply here. Will I be ceasing from evil, doing only good, doing good for others if I watch T.V., have an ice cream, etc.? In other word what is going on with you when you do these things? Are you relaxing (still in meditation) so that you can rest and unwind after a period of hard work? Are you trying to avoid your responsibilities and escape into a fantasy world? What matters is not someone else's opinion of what is good or bad for you but that you really look and see for yourself if it is good. You are competent and you do know for yourself deep inside. Be willing to ask and do not carry on a lengthy discussion but just sit still with the question. In this way you learn what it is inside that really knows. "You are not Him, but He is all of you." You

are responsible and will reap the karma of what you do--never doubt it, but this is how we learn what our heart is. We find out through experience what is right and which of the myriad voices is the real one.

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### ANNOUNCING

#### THE SHASTA ABBEY BOOK OF CEREMONIES

Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, Abbess of Shasta Abbey, has recently compiled a complete collection of the ceremonies and scriptures used by lay trainees in the Sōtō Zen Buddhist Church.

We have not been able to offer Scripture books for some time and are pleased to be able to again provide these up to date editions.

The recitation, study and memorization of the central scriptures of Sōtō Zen Buddhism is held to be of the utmost importance for spiritual growth. The daily ceremonial, including the Morning and Evening Offices (formally called Morning Service and Vespers) and the Mealtime Ceremony, are of great value to laymen as well as monks.

The new books will soon be on sale at the Priory. The cost is £1.00, which includes shipping. Please use the order form at the back of this Journal if you wish to reserve a copy now.

## PRIORY NEWS

Retreats. Rev. Rōshi Kōshin Schomberg led a retreat near Lancaster in mid March. The retreat was attended by twenty-four people. The week-long sesshin held at the Priory from 9 April through the Easter weekend was attended by nine people. Rev. Rōshi Högetsu Schomberg led the annual Holland retreat at Theresia-Hoeve in Langenboom from 18 May through 20 May. She also lectured the evening of the 21st at the Kosmos Centre in Amsterdam.

Work in Progress. During the April sesshin, the long and heavy beams which will eventually make up the floor joists and rafters of the new Meditation Hall were cleaned and re-stacked. Other major outdoor work projects have included the repair of some of the stone walls and wire fences damaged during the heavy snows this winter; the creation of two new flower gardens in the courtyard between the main house and the present Meditation Hall; and the graveling of the remainder of the drive between the two buildings. The vegetable garden is also well under way and plans are presently being made for the building of a new front gate which will provide more privacy for community members and guests.

Donations. A welcome addition to the Priory's furnishings has been made by the donation of several comfortable easy chairs and two sofas (the latter have been moved into the lay community room). We are also grateful for donations of rugs, some exceptionally large double-glazed windows, food and applicances. We also wish to thank the many people who support the Priory through cash donations.

Priests' Titles. Some changes have recently been made in the manner of addressing priests of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church. These changes are in accordance with traditional Zen practice and reflect our efforts to follow the spirit of Dōgen Zenji's "Taitaikōhō" ("How Junior Priests Must Behave in

the Presence of Senior Priests"). Priests who have completed the five-year program at Shasta Abbey are now addressed as "Rev. Teacher"; those certified as Rōshis are now addressed as "Rev. Rōshi"; and priests who have received the Transmission are addressed as "Reverend". A priest who has received the parish priest certificate may use the initials "O.B.C." to indicate that he or she is a priest of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church. The name "Order of Buddhist Contemplatives" is the closest we have been able to come to expressing in English words the meaning of the term "Zen Buddhist", for "Zen" means literally "meditation" or "contemplation". (Please note, however, that this name applies only to Shasta Abbey and its affiliate Priories and groups.)

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### SPODE HOUSE RETREAT

For several years, priests from Throssel Hole Priory have led retreats at Spode House, near Birmingham during the summer months. This year, Rev. Rōshi Hōgetsu Schomberg and Rev. Rōshi Kōshin Schomberg will again be leading a week-long retreat with the assistance of Father Stephen Gowers, OCSO, a Catholic priest. The Spode House retreat, like all retreats led by priests from the Priory, is open to people of all faiths. The schedule followed at the retreat will be similar to that followed during retreats at Throssel Hole Priory. For reservations please write to The Warden, Spode House, Rugeley, Staffs., WS15 1PT.

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ZAZEN BEING OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE  
neither neglect it, nor regard  
it lightly....Centuries ago the  
Buddha forsook both his home  
and his country....However the  
men of the present time say that  
they need only practise that  
which comes easily and this is  
very bad; such thinking is not  
at all akin to true Buddhism.  
If you concentrate only on one  
thing and consider it is train-  
ing then it is impossible to  
even lie down in peace. If one  
action is done with a bored or  
uneasy mind then all things be-  
come boring or uneasy; I know  
full well that they who seek  
things the easy way do not look  
for the True Way. Dōgen Zenji,  
Gakudo-yōjinshū:Aspects of Zazen

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